Remembering Colin Ward

1924-2010

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Published in 2011 by Five Leaves Publications
PO Box 8786, Nottingham NG1 9AW

This ebook edition published in 2013

www.fiveleaves.co.uk

ISBN: 978-1-907869-97-6

This collection has been compiled and edited by Ross Bradshaw, Ben Ward, Harriet Ward & Ken Worpole.
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Five Leaves receives financial support from Arts Council England

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Colin Ward was an anarchist, a journalist, and the author of books on architecture, work, childhood, education, social history and many other topics of importance to those who seek a better world. A quiet man of great integrity, he won an admiring and affectionate readership across the world, and was one of the most influential thinkers of his generation.

At his funeral on 1 March 2010, relatives and friends were invited to remember Colin, and these talks comprise the opening section of this short collection. A memorial meeting was held at Conway Hall, London, on 10 July, 2010, and the tributes given there follow. A selected bibliography of Colin's major publications is provided at the end.

At the Funeral

Ipswich Crematorium

Monday, 1 March, 2010

Opening Address

Ben Ward

Good afternoon everyone. As you know, we're here today to celebrate Colin's life and to say goodbye. I went to a few funerals with Colin and he would always say that they were, by and large, jolly occasions, opportunities for old friends and family members to get together. With that in mind, we've put together a service which we hope Colin would have enjoyed and we hope it will make you smile a bit too.

Colin spent his first 55 years in London (except for his five years in the army between 1942 and 1947) and his next 30 years in Suffolk. So he didn't move around an awful lot. But his ideas, his spirit and his special personality travelled a long way.

One of Colin's catch-phrases, particularly when he was offered another slice of toast at lunchtime or a second helping of whichever delicious dish Harriet had prepared, was 'think of others'. For the next hour or so, we're going to ignore that advice and think about him.

I'd like to invite George West to say a few words. George has been ringing up Colin twice a week for the last 30 years, but they go back a lot further than that, as you will shortly hear.

A Steady Rhythm of Friendship

George West

I met Colin in November 1950. We both travelled to the same office from Gant's Hill tube station, the Essex Shangri-la. Together for 60 years we enjoyed our tangled lives. To encapsulate the essence of someone is poetry, and I'm no poet. My memories are not highs and lows but a steady rhythm of friendship. The man did not have in him any spite, jealousy or envy. Was he virtuous? I have no idea, but his actions came from the same seed. That is how I see him now — the present tense, because we make each other: he is part of me.

The office in which we worked was not large — about eight assistants designing public housing with dedicated commitment. At that time in the office there was an enthusiasm for growing avocado plants. Colin and I thought we should try ourselves, so begins the tale. We went to the nearest greengrocery, at the corner of Davis Street and Oxford Street, just like a small town. Our idea was to buy an avocado pear and from its many seeds grow many plants. You must remember, in 1950 the avocado pear was a most exotic purchase. We were successful and started back to the office. A lady outside the shop coming towards us dropped her hand-bag. Colin immediately stepped forward, picked up the hand-bag and gently handed it back to her. Colin waited, and then said, "You could say thank you." She then punched Colin in the chest!

In the office we sliced the pear and were outraged that we had only the single nut. Those were simple, *Cider with Rosie* days.

So! Let us all celebrate the memory of Colin and joyfully acknowledge our debt to this lovely man.

A Constant Influence

John Pilgrim

However certain our expectation
The moment foreseen may be unexpected
When it arrives. It comes when we are
Engrossed with matters of other urgency

Those words, from *Murder in the Cathedral*, have a particular resonance today. I was writing an obituary of another friend, John Rety, when I heard that Colin Ward too had died. These two fit together in my mind. It was John Rety, then editing a coffee house magazine called *Intimate Review*, who asked me to go to the Malatesta Club.

"It's rumoured," he said darkly, "that anarchists go there. See what you can find out." Not knowing what anarchists were I went with some trepidation. There I was impressed enough by Philip Sansom to take the newspaper *Freedom*. Later when Colin launched *Anarchy*, I subscribed to that too.

I had a street bookstall at the time, in Charing Cross Road. One day Colin Ward wandered up and surveying the science fiction racks, asked me to write a piece on science fiction for his magazine. Later a revised version won me a Mature State scholarship to university. This major life change was the direct result of Colin's unassuming intervention.

And it didn't stop there. I had originally intended to read history, but in *Anarchy* I was reading people we knew collectively as Colin's sociologists. Jock Young, David Downes, Stan Cohen, Laurie Taylor, all later to become important figures. So I read sociology and politics instead.

Colin remained a constant influence. When asked to be the libertarian speaker at a conference at Hull, it was Colin's *Anarchy as a Theory of Organisation* I used as a basis for my own paper.

We met up again when I came to live in Suffolk. Up against a time problem, he asked me to do an obituary of Ron Fletcher, formerly Professor of

Sociology at York, and my external examiner at Hull. “I didn’t know him,” I said. “Although I did see him get into a car once.” “That’ll do,” said Colin, “and I know you have his books.” That started me writing again. Colin Ward was a very direct influence on my life.

More importantly he developed a theory of organisation and desirable social change that made rather more sense than the standard top-down ideas of official ideologies. It is not an exaggeration to say that his ideas, on housing, on education, on the unofficial structures of everyday life, influenced the thinking of many people all over the world.

It was particularly fitting that he should have been appointed to a Chair of Social Policy by the London School of Economics. He was, like Richard Titmuss who founded that Department, an autodidact who left school without formal qualifications, and like Titmuss, made his mark through sheer perception.

Colin would, I think, agree with another character from *Murder in the Cathedral* who says,

> *I see nothing quite conclusive in the art of temporal government*
> *But violence, duplicity and frequent malversation.*
> *They have but one rule, to seize the power and keep it.*

Doesn’t that resonate today?

I had some reservations about quoting twice from T.S. Eliot but I felt Colin’s wonderful eclecticism would take that in its stride. After all he managed to get much of his sociology from a Jewish theologian called Martin Buber.

I’m not sure how he would have reacted to the spectacle of a Tory Prime Minister-in-waiting sounding off on the virtues of worker’s control and mutual aid. He would not I suspect have regarded it as a sign that the world he wanted was about to be delivered by Conservative Central Office. Indeed the very word “central” would have been anathema to him. His watchwords were federalism, mutualism, cooperation, and community.

Colin has said that his ideas derive primarily from Peter Kropotkin and Gustav Landauer. Typically, he underestimated himself. His originality lay in the connections he made, applying the ideas of those who influenced him to the practical problems of the 20th and 21st centuries. He could be astonishingly prescient. Forty years ago he warned that the problems of unaffordable housing were on the way. And of course he was one of the first to spot the developing crisis over water.

Colin Ward's genius lay in making connections. He had, more than most, a highly developed sociological imagination. The phrase is C. Wright Mills'. "That imagination," says Mills, "enables us to grasp history and biography and the relations between the two in society." Colin had that imagination. In thirty odd books and innumerable talks and articles he demonstrated it. People took notice. Things were done differently thereafter. He started, or re-started if you wish, a tradition of radical rethinking of conventional wisdom.

The world is a better place because Colin Ward has lived in it. He was, and remains, an example to us all.

What It Was Like Having Colin Ward as a Dad

Ben Ward

Although I am Colin's only biological son, he actually played a large part in bringing up five boys in total, Alan and Doug Balfour in the 50s and 60s, Barney and Tom Unwin in the 60s and 70s, and me in the 70s and 80s.

He contributed to our well-being in different ways, whether helping Doug through his apprenticeship in carpentry, inspiring Alan to research and write about blues music, connecting with Tom through his book *Anarchy in Action* or just coming out to support Barney or myself when we were playing music in pubs.

Colin was a very kind and non-interfering parent. If his sons went off the rails, instead of becoming angry and punishing us verbally or physically, he would leave us to get whatever it was out of our system. If we got in with the wrong crowd he left us to our own devices and let us find our own way out of it instead of voicing his disapproval and possibly causing us to rebel even more. He was probably quite amused rather than horrified by some of the characters we brought home.

A good example of Colin's understanding and forgiving nature can be found in the following story, from the mid-70s, which Barney has recalled:

Barney and Tom were on their way to Wandsworth Park in southwest London for a kick-about one afternoon when one of them managed to put the football through the front window of a house. The owner of the house came out and confronted them, demanding to know where they lived. The boys told him, then went to the park and strung out their game of football for as long as they could so as to put off the dreadful moment when they had to go home and face the music.

When they had plucked up the courage to return, they found the man whose window they had broken sitting round the table with Colin and Harriet drinking red wine. Colin had found out that the man was a hurdy-gurdy

maker and so had instantly befriended him, presumably after quietly paying for the repairs. Not a cross word was ever said about that broken window.

You may be wondering if Colin ever participated in our impromptu games of football. He might have, except that he didn't have a competitive bone in his body. He wasn't interested in sport or games of any kind, but if he was forced to take sides he would favour the underdog, pretending to support football teams like Accrington Stanley or Hamilton Academicals, probably because he saw them as perennial strugglers... or maybe he just liked their names.

Leading by example, instead of instruction, was Colin's way of teaching us right from wrong. For instance, he lived very simply. If someone had gone to the trouble of cooking a meal for him, he would say it was 'delicious', sometimes before he'd even tasted it.

When we lived in south Suffolk, if he needed to go to London for the day, he would walk three-quarters of a mile to the bus stop, get the bus to Ipswich and take the train from there, rather than ask me or my mum for a lift to Colchester, which would have made the journey both shorter and cheaper.

Sometimes he would be asked how he got back from Hadleigh, where the nearest photocopy shop was, three miles away and, and he'd reply that he walked, 'like God meant me to.'

So he was an enthusiastic walker and user of public transport, never snobbish about food or drink, and he didn't think he was better than anyone else. He didn't impose these qualities on us but we could observe them in his behaviour every day. He was also fond of cats...

You won't be surprised to learn that Colin helped us all with our homework. Doug received advice when he had to do an assignment on Isambard Kingdom Brunel, while Alan inherited Colin's meticulous style and attractive presentation methods for his project on the river Wandle in 1960. Thirty years after this, I was about to go to college but didn't know whether to study music or philosophy. When I told him my dilemma, Colin went to his typewriter and came back with this message:

‘The world is full of philosophers and full of musicians. But who does everybody want to listen to?’

The implication was that philosophy was an esoteric art only accessible to extremely brainy people, whereas music was actually of benefit to the community.

Perhaps the one quality which sums up my memories of Colin, and something which thankfully he never lost, even when everything else about him was breaking down, was his sense of humour.

I can picture him at his typewriter or at the dining table, thinking hard about something, with a Craven A cigarette on the go, then I would come in and his whole face would change and he would start smiling and trying to make me laugh. Whenever my friends turned up he would give them nicknames like ‘the great Pipe’ or ‘the great Moore’ and try to make them laugh as well.

Finally, as a grandparent and step-grandparent, Colin was at first protective, saving youngsters from giant beetles, spiders and mice and then later when his grandchildren became teenagers and tended to dominate the conversation more, he would just let them be themselves and sit there chuckling quietly.

I think we’ve all been lucky to grow up with someone so patient, and unselfish, a true man of peace.

Nescafé and a Craven A

David Downes

I first met Colin through Sue, my wife, then teaching at Woodberry Down, one of the first comprehensives, in the late 1950s till 1961. A fellow teacher was Frances Sokolov and through Frances we met John Hewetson, a wonderful man who, as we lived in Bermondsey, was our family doctor for a while, Philip Sansom and Colin. I had never met anybody like them. They questioned all kinds of conformism and it was immediately clear that Colin in particular had an exuberant idea of what a good life and the good society not only might look like, but could actually be in the here and now. They talked animatedly about art, science, music, ideas for social change without the po-faced earnestness I was used to on the left. They had a great sense of fun, but were interested and didn't scoff too much at my fumbling attempt to do a sociological study of delinquency. Colin published a few articles and reviews I wrote on crime, justice and education in *Anarchy*, a journal whose contents were often written by Colin under pseudonyms based on the names of the streets he had lived in. This journal, whose vivid covers were designed mostly by Rufus Segar, never failed to capture the imagination and the times we were living in. Though I could never claim to be a fully fledged anarchist, it slowly dawned on me that what Colin was really about — the unfolding and nurturing of anarchist ideas of mutual aid and co-operative self-help underlying every social institution — was the best expression of socialism I knew. It was also a philosophy you could live by in the present, without waiting for some far-off revolutionary, and invariably false dawn. These were the ideals he spelt out so eloquently in books from his first, much acclaimed and translated *Anarchy in Action* of 1973 to his last, beautifully written *Anarchism: A Very Short Introduction of 2004*.

So it was a great stroke of luck to have met Colin so relatively early on, and it was a constant pleasure to go, with our children, to some of the many gatherings that he and Harriet laid on in their home in Putney. Among so many of the great things about him that we cherish were his generosity and his humour. Colin's ideas always resonated especially well in Italy, where in

the early 1990s he was an honoured guest at a conference on anarchism in Bologna. An Italian friend visiting England and researching post-revolutionary Russian feminism was very keen to meet him. She left, having talked with him for some time, bursting with ideas and with several books he had lent or given her, one of which was an original edition of Emma Goldman's *My Disillusionment in Russia*, signed by Emma Goldman. "I hope you get that back," I said to Colin. "Oh yes, of course I will" was his reply. And back it came a few months later. Countless visitors and students have been similarly helped by Colin, not least Judith Suissa, Stan Cohen's daughter, who wrote a doctoral thesis, now a book, on anarchist ideas and education only a few years ago.

Colin's humour was also memorable. Looking for a title for a book on gambling I'd been struggling with for a decade, Colin instantly came up with "How about *A Fool and his Money?*" I regret not using that. It would have sold more copies than it did. On a visit to London, staying overnight with us in Wandsworth, we asked what he'd like for breakfast. "Nescafé and a Craven A" came the reply.

A rare accolade for Colin came from Stan Cohen, author of such classics as *Folk Devils and Moral Panics*, whose articles Colin had published in the 1960s in *Anarchy*. Stan has a collection of postcard size photos in his room at the LSE of people, a very select pantheon, whom he admires: Samuel Beckett, Noam Chomsky, Nelson Mandela and, not least, George Orwell. Looking at these one day, I asked Stan whose biography he would write if he had the chance. Though there was no picture of him among them, he replied: "Colin Ward."

The Memorial Meeting

Conway Hall, London

Saturday, 10 July 2010

Welcome and Introduction

Ken Worpole

Could I start by welcoming so many of you to Conway Hall this afternoon to commemorate the life and work of Colin Ward, a friend, colleague (and political conscience) to so many of us gathered here.

I first met Colin in 1973 when he came to give a talk at the Centre for Urban Studies in Islington, where I was attending an in-service training course for London teachers. Unlike many of the other lecturers, who were prone to cultivate an air of hard-earned expertise, Colin's affable, anecdotal style initially appeared to lack seriousness or substance, yet by the end of his contribution we all felt uplifted and vindicated in our work as teachers in the city — and completely disarmed. More importantly, I can remember much of the talk nearly forty years later, though this is partly because some of its themes and concerns appeared a few years later in his seminal book, *The Child in the City*, published in 1978, and never out of print since. Colin's enthusiasm for the customary life of the street and the playground, and for the many practical and social skills to be learned there, won his audience completely.

After that I got to meet Colin on a fairly regular basis, often at *New Society* or *New Statesman* parties and then in the last decade or so as a visitor, along with my wife, Larraine, to Colin and Harriet's home in Kersey and then later in Debenham. I'd like here to pay tribute to Harriet Ward, who so clearly provided the intellectual companionship, love and well-run home which gave Colin the emotional and physical space he needed to write so widely and prolifically on his many interests. Indeed Harriet herself is also an accomplished writer, and her memoir of her father, Griffin Barry, *A Man of Small Importance*, is a thoroughly poignant account of the personal and political culture of her parent's revolutionary generation in the first decades of the twentieth-century.

I therefore feel honoured to be asked to take the chair in this afternoon of memories and tributes, and warmly invite you to share in these recollections

of a truly good and inspiring man.

Meeting Colin in the Sixties

Harriet Ward

I first met Colin in 1965, at Garnett College in Roehampton, where we were both taking a one-year teacher-training course specially geared for mature students wanting to teach in Further Education. (And we were both 'mature' — I was 34 and Colin was 40.) I had two small children — present today — whose father had died, so it seemed that the obvious new career for me should be teaching. And Colin was there — so he told me later — partly for a change after 12 years working in architecture, but also to give himself more time for writing.

The course had been under way since the previous September, but somehow we didn't notice each other until close to the end of the summer term. In lectures Colin would sit at the back on his own, quietly taking notes, never asking a question or drawing attention to himself in any way, and he didn't hang around after class. He was editing *Anarchy* at that time, as I later discovered, and was sometimes busy at home pasting up the magazine or hastily writing articles himself to fill the space when a promised contribution failed to arrive.

What first drew my attention to Colin one day was noticing a copy of *New Society* under his arm, a new journal which I had just discovered myself. So our first conversations were about articles in *New Society*, and I saw at once we had a similar outlook on life — and more surprising to me, that Colin knew a lot about the politically left-leaning world that I came from — including progressive education, when that topic came up in the course.

But what really struck me about my new acquaintance was his contribution to a seminar discussion on 'environmental education'. Each of us was asked in turn how we might structure a lesson on environmental education, and one by one we gave predictable, rather trite answers — a walk in the country (or a park, if we were teaching in an urban setting) pointing out the flora and fauna and the features of the Nature all around us. (Notice, by the way, that at that time 'environmental education' was assumed to be

something *rural*, to do with Nature.) But when Colin's turn came, he stunned the group with a riveting presentation that made us blush with embarrassment for our own inadequacy and lack of imagination.

My lesson would follow the route of a tomato seed, he said — remembering that a tomato seed passes through the human body without being digested. We would start with its origin in a tomato on some old chap's allotment — then as part of a meal with his family, down through someone's digestive tract — and from there into the municipal sewage system, where it might end up as part of the clear effluent flowing into the local river and eventually out to sea... (At each stage of the journey, of course, there would be investigation and discussion.)

From that moment on I knew Colin was someone special, and determined to get to know him better. So I sought him out at lunch-time, and introduced him to the only other interesting student I'd met, and was pleased that they liked each other. Meanwhile every conversation with Colin increased my interest in this intriguing man. And not just in his intellect! I rather admired his spectacular mane of grey hair, blowing about in the wind. My eagle eye had also noticed cat-hairs clinging to his trouser-legs — another good sign.

But the end of term was fast approaching!

How could I cement this friendship before the course was over and we would both return to our separate busy lives?

I had observed that Colin came to college by public transport, and learned that he lived in Fulham, whereas I drove right across London from West Hampstead. Fulham was more or less on my route [laughter], so I began offering him a lift home after class. He was always agreeably surprised at the apparent coincidence that I was ready to drive off just as he came out of the front door... Little did he know I'd been sitting in the car-park shuffling my papers until from the corner of my eye I saw him emerge, and then I started the engine. Colin, you won't be surprised to hear, was not alert to women's wiles — or indeed to anyone's wiles.

Once at his front door, it wasn't long before I was invited in for a cup of tea, and met the anarchist friends with whom he shared the house — Vernon

Richards and Peta Hewetson — and of course their cats, and the two boys they were jointly bringing up, Alan and Doug Balfour, whose mother had died at about the same time as my husband. She had been Colin's 'companion', as the anarchists say, so it turned out that he was widowed too, in a sense, just as I was.

Our relationship developed rapidly in those after-college afternoons at 33 Ellerby Street, thanks to my long-suffering child-minder waiting patiently for me to collect my little boys (that was the indispensable Lily, whom some people here will remember).

Eventually it was I who declared myself first, when I sensed that Colin was smitten too, but was too shy to say so. And I was right! He was! And yet, and yet... this absurdly modest man was convinced I must have made a mistake, and would 'find him out' as an unworthy partner when I knew him better.

One day he shyly handed me a file of testimonials — documents submitted with his application to Garnett College, saying what a good teacher he would make. (And here I must explain that the course we were on was supposed to be a graduate course, which was OK for me, but Colin had had to blag his way in, as he'd left school at 15 and had only a couple of evening class A levels to his name. Hence this handful of references addressed "To Whom it May Concern".)

These fine words, Colin apparently hoped, might help to recommend him as a future life-companion. And I quote —

> *It is a pleasure to write, but difficult to do so adequately, of a man of so many parts, of such integrity, determination and ability as* ***Mr Colin Ward...*** *There are few people who can develop ideas, particularly on social and economic questions, in writing, as a lecturer and as a discussion leader, in such a scholarly and authoritative manner that is also humorous and fair.*

So said Anthony Weaver, Senior Lecturer in Education at Jesus College, Oxford. Another Senior Lecturer, this one at the Bartlett School of

Architecture, felt ‘personally indebted to [Colin] for having taught me a great deal.’

But the clincher came from Gabi Epstein, a partner in the firm of architects Shepheard and Epstein where Colin had worked for 10 years from 1952 to 1961. To begin with, Gabi flatteringly recommends Colin as ‘our most senior architect... an extremely competent architect of much experience’, etc etc. I say ‘flattering’ because Colin never qualified as an architect — he was basically a drawing-board man, he used to tell me, though he did visit sites too, and negotiated with contractors. Then Gabi remembers that Colin is applying to become a teacher, not an architect, and he goes on —

> *The reason why we are unlikely ever to be able to replace Mr Ward is that beyond all that I have said above, he had a great educational influence in our office generally. I think I have probably never met anyone in my life who is so knowledgeable on so many subjects... If I ever had to found a university with one professor in it, I should want Colin Ward to be that professor.*

Over the years I’ve heard endless amusing tales from Colin about life in that office — and from George West, another colleague and lifelong friend of Colin’s, who worked there too. A few years after Garnett College, Colin applied for a job at the Town and Country Planning Association, and this time the other partner, Peter Shepheard, wrote in similar glowing terms to recommend him —

> *Frankly I find it impossible to imagine anyone who would be more suitable for this vital and interesting job, etc. etc. [wrote Peter, — and then, once again] —*
>
> *He is very widely read, indeed it was something of a joke in our office to try and find some subject on which Colin was not informed, but we never managed it.*

I’m sure many of you will recognise the Colin we knew in those words of more than 40 years ago. *Of course* he got into Garnett College, *of course* he got the job at the TCPA, and of course he won my heart — not with the words of other people, but with himself (although I still had a job to

convince him he was good enough for me). Colin was not just a brain-box, but a man of many domestic talents, as I would soon discover, and a born family man. He was also, as we know, the kindest, most generous person you could hope to meet, without a shred of personal ambition or conceit — he who had so much to be boastful about. Oh lucky me!

It was not quite plain sailing — yet. It took us a year to re-organise our two households, to settle into teaching, and find a house to live in. I read a lot of *Anarchy* that year, I even wrote for *Anarchy* — and in so doing discovered I'd been an anarchist all my life without knowing it. (Which I think may be true for other people reading Colin on anarchism — it all makes such good sense.)

We were married in 1966 and spent the rest of the Sixties living at 19 Schubert Road, Putney, teaching in different colleges, and adding a son of our own to the family — Ben Ward. Colin's Fulham pseudonym for articles in *Anarchy*, John Ellerby, was replaced by a new one — Frank Schubert — and our spacious kitchen table was cleared once a month to paste up the journal.

For Colin, the Sixties was important professionally as well as personally, for *Anarchy* was the seed-bed of the anarchist philosophy you'll be hearing about in just a moment. For me, the Sixties was the beginning of a wonderfully happy companionship — I use the anarchist word for it — that ended earlier this year. I count myself lucky indeed to have spent 45 years in Colin's company.

Colin Ward: Making Anarchism Respectable, But Not Too Respectable

Stuart White

In a 1961 article, based on an address to an anarchist summer school, Colin asked 'Are we [anarchists] respectable enough?' By this, he said, 'I am not concerned with the way we dress, or whether our private lives conform to a statistical norm… but with the quality of our anarchist ideas: are our *ideas* worthy of respect?'

Colin was acutely sensitive to the reaction that many people have when they first encounter anarchism: 'Sounds great, but it's surely unworkable.' He saw that this reaction quickly leads to a dismissal of anarchism as unworthy of serious attention. He wanted to get people beyond this reaction.

How did he do this? By putting forward three very plausible claims.

The first is a claim about *pluralism*. Societies use various techniques to meet needs and solve problems. They use markets and similar techniques which rely on private property, competition and the pursuit of individual self-interest. They use techniques based on authority, command and bureaucracy. And then, there is a third technique or family of techniques based on mutual aid and cooperative self-help.

'Anarchy', for Colin, is simply a social space in which these techniques of mutuality predominate. It is a social space which people enter (and leave) freely; in which they relate as equals; and in which they work cooperatively, to solve a problem, meet a need, or just enjoy creativity for its own sake.

And the aim of anarch*ism* is to try to push and shove society in the direction of greater anarchy in this sense.

Once we conceive anarchy in this way, Colin argued, we see that, far from being an unrealistic utopia, it is already a part of our social existence. This is Colin's second key claim: anarchy isn't only in the future: it is *part of the*

present. To some extent, we already do solve problems and meet needs using anarchy. For example, anarchy is already there in the meeting of a 12-step group, whose members grapple together with a shared problem of addiction. It is there in adventure playgrounds, Friendly Societies, the Royal National Lifeboat Institute, Wikipedia, and in thousands upon thousands of other free, egalitarian and cooperative social spaces.

It is often there in mundane ways that we take for granted. On my way here I stopped in a newsagent to ask directions. He gave me directions. He didn't sell me them, and there is no law dictating that he give them. He gave them freely, and in similar situations I give them freely and, I hope, the newsagent receives them freely. Here is one need which, to some extent, our society meets anarchistically — by developing a norm of mutual aid which regulates how we behave.

Now if anarchy is already 'in action' in our society, solving problems and meeting needs, then perhaps it could work to solve more problems and meet more needs.

This brings us to Colin's third claim: the *practicality* of anarchy. Colin aimed to show that anarchy can address needs and solve problems where markets and states currently fail or do a poor job. This is why his anarchist writing did not take the form of examinations of concepts like the state or liberty and so on, but an engagement with real social problems: housing, education, transport, energy, food, water.

In this way, I think Colin succeeded in meeting his own challenge of showing that anarchist ideas are 'worthy of respect'.

However, I think it is also important to see that Colin's anarchism remains very challenging. It is not easily assimilated into other perspectives, either of the left or the right.

Let's start with the right. 'Big society not big government' is the slogan of the new Coalition government. On the face of it, it sounds like a slogan that Colin could only have approved of. Wasn't his basic message precisely to advocate the 'big society' as an alternative to the 'big state'?

In fact, Colin's anarchism suggests some tough questions to ask of the Coalition and its 'big society' agenda.

For example, Colin's work prompts us to ask: how far does the 'big society' apply to the economy? Is it a corrective to the 'big market' as well as the 'big state'? So, for example, does it mean workers' control in industry? Does it mean the replacement of commercial banking with mutualistic financial institutions? Does it mean building up community production as an alternative to reliance on the market?

But the challenge is also undoubtedly there to the left as well. Why, Colin asks, do leftists so often want the state to do things *for or to people* instead of *enabling people to do their own thing*?

Housing is the area where Colin pressed this criticism to great effect. But it went much wider.

For example, many on the left look to state education as a potentially great leveller in our society. When children 'fail' at school — fail by the school's standards — they worry about whether schools have enough resources. Or they worry that perhaps children's chances are being undermined by what's happening in the family before they even reach the school gates. And then they start to consider ways the state might intervene in families to improve children's chances.

Colin's approach was very different. He proposed a much more flexible model of education, in which people could access places of learning across the life-cycle, but would also be free to learn skills in the community. He entertained the 'modest proposal' that going to school should not be compulsory.

To any social democrat (such as myself) this is immensely challenging. It is hard for well-intentioned social democrats to let go and give people freedom to this extent. They worry about what some people might do with this freedom. Colin challenges the social democrat by continually pressing the question: Why not let go? Why not let people do their own thing? Why not trust them to be responsible, competent?

In short, Colin's ideas continue to throw out searching questions for the conventionally minded of both left and right. This is why I think Colin pulled off something that is actually quite difficult: he made anarchist ideas respectable without making them *too* respectable.

Colin Ward: Sower of Ideas

Peter Marshall

Colin Ward was a determined sower of libertarian ideas and one of the most influential British anarchists since the Second World War.

I first met Colin in the early 70s when he was living in south London when he appeared in shorts on a summer's evening and invited me into his kitchen to discuss William Godwin, the father of British anarchism. We shared a common interest in Godwin's companion Mary Wollstonecraft as well as allotments, land use, education and the playful creativity of children. *Anarchy in Action* (1973), his main theoretical work, confirmed my belief in the practical possibility of anarchism here and now. I appreciated the way his reviews were invariably positive and I was the fortunate beneficiary on several occasions. Whenever we appeared on radio together to discuss anarchism, I was always struck by his calm and shrewd comments.

Colin Ward for me represented the best in the British anarchist tradition. After becoming an anarchist during the Second World War whilst posted in Scotland in the army, he never wavered in his belief in the harmful effects of government and authority and the incalculable benefits of a federal, decentralised society of self-governing communities. As he declared in a radio interview in 1968, he was an 'anarchist-communist in the Kropotkin tradition'. He was very clear that anarchist society is 'a society which organizes itself without authority' and that anarchism is a 'description of human organization rooted in the experience of everyday life'. With these beliefs, he helped make, along with Vernon Richards, Nicolas Walter and others, the paper *Freedom* and the journal *Anarchy*, the centre of thoughtful and constructive anarchism in Britain. His work *Anarchy in Action*, based on a series of articles written for them, was widely translated and reached far beyond the anarchist circle of enthusiasts.

In all his work, Colin celebrated the creative potential, initiative and autonomy of young people and ordinary folk, of those oppressed and

marginalized by coercive power and authority. If ‘freedom for the pike means death for the minnow’, there was no doubt on whose side he was and whose freedom he wished to expand. He brilliantly showed that however tyrannical a State or however desperate circumstances might be, the innate human impulses to create and co-operate cannot be crushed.

Having left school at 15 to work in an architect’s office and largely self-taught, Colin would be the first to admit that he was not a theorist in an abstract sense. He saw himself primarily as a populariser and propagandist of anarchist ideas. Nevertheless, he was highly original in applying his profound libertarian sensibility and understanding to what he called anarchist ‘applications’ and ‘solutions’ in a wide variety of fields, from housing, architecture, planning, social policy, allotments, squatting, education, to transport and water. His books, many of which were written in collaboration with other authors, all took a definite anarchist point of view and were mainly concerned with the relations between people and the environments in which they lived, worked and played. In all his writings, he encouraged the voluntary, co-operative and democratic tendencies within society and called for the widest possible decentralisation of coercive power. Although self-effacing and drawing extensively on the works of others and quoting copiously, his warm humanity always shines through his clear and measured prose.

In his endearingly modest way, when asked to write an autobiography, Colin came up with a collection of essays on his favourite mentors called *Influences*. He read widely in anarchist and socialist literature and often acknowledged his debts to Godwin for his views of libertarian education; to Kropotkin, for his notion of mutual aid and the humanisation of work in federated networks of autonomous communes; to Martin Buber, for bringing out the permanent conflict between what he called the ‘social principle’ and the ‘political principle’; to Gustav Landauer, for reminding him that the State is not an abstract entity above society but ‘a certain relationship between human beings’; to Paul Goodman, for making clear that a free society is an extension of already existing ‘spheres of free action’; and finally to Alexander Herzen, for convincing him that one should work for change in the present rather than in some imaginary future which may never come.

While acknowledging these influences, Colin decidedly made them his own and scattered his seed far and wide, however hard and infertile the ground. His piecemeal, gradualist approach and his emphasis on practical anarchy in action both helped form and reflected what I call the ‘second wave’ of ‘post-left anarchy’ which developed towards the end of the 20th century throughout the West. With its DIY approach and stress on mutual aid and self-sufficiency, it continues to create webs of voluntary associations and co-operatives, libertarian institutions and different experiments in communal living.

Colin will be remembered as one of the great British anarchists of the last half of the twentieth century and as the one who probably had the greatest influence on social policy and environmental planning. And it is typical of this far-seeing, warm-hearted man that he should at the end of his long and fruitful life conclude in his *Very Short Introduction to Anarchism* that in the 21st century the ‘best future prospect of anarchism will be with the ecological movement’.

Colin was a very modest man who always liked to underplay his important contribution to social anarchist ideas. Like an ancient Daoist sage, he guided from behind so that people could say ‘We did it’ without being aware of his benign and playful influence.

As long as freedom, justice, kindness and conviviality are considered important human values, Colin will be like ‘a seed beneath the snow’ (to use one of his favourite phrases), ready to burst forth wherever there is a thaw in the winter of Western culture.

Colin at Work

Tony Fyson

In my few minutes I would like to try to give a flavour of what it was like to work with Colin. We shared an office for eight years in the 1970s, in what Colin always intended to be his final employment before turning to freelance writing.

We were both appointed by the Town and Country Planning Association from teaching posts in Further Education, but with additional experience in architecture and planning, to set up a new environmental education unit. The main purpose was to develop environmental awareness at secondary school level, but with emphasis on the built environment and the preparation of future citizen participators. I was Colin's deputy, with Rose Tanner and later the art teacher Eileen Adams (who is here today) making up a team of four.

We started work on 1st April 1971, having spent the previous weekend helping to move the Association, a voluntary pressure group independent of professional interests, out of its ramshackle Covent Garden premises and into the grandeur of 17 Carlton House Terrace, courtesy of an exceptionally advantageous long lease from the Crown Commissioners (which they are now thought to regret!).

The TCPA provided Colin with his happiest working years, one of his guiding maxims being that contentment in work relates directly to the degree of autonomy it offers. TCPA Director David Hall welcomed Colin's originality and wisely encouraged it.

With his long experience of writing and editing the anarchist weekly *Freedom* and his own creation the monthly journal *Anarchy*, it is not surprising that Colin's first priority was to launch a new periodical for teachers, the *Bulletin of Environmental Education*, known as *BEE*. There followed pioneering work on educative Town Trails, Urban Studies Centres, and the emerging techniques of civic education, acknowledging the importance of problem-solving and conflict resolution in bringing local

studies alive for teenagers. He saw and developed ideas that had connections with trends towards active learning and ‘de-schooling’ and latterly, with Eileen, developed new methods of education for visual and sensory awareness of the urban scene.

Colin was one of those rare people who live and work according to the ideals they espouse. In his world, people came together to co-operate on tasks and projects with leadership changing hands as appropriate to the interests and talents available. No job was too much trouble if the end product and the limited resources available required it. Thus it was that Colin, Rose and I, and any other TCPA staff available, spent about three weeks collating, stapling, enveloping and stamping the first issue of *BEE*. 13,000 loose-leaf copies were printed in-house on a primitive off-set litho machine and sent free to every secondary school in the country. They were addressed to the head of environmental studies, in the certain knowledge that in those days no such teacher existed. Colin wanted to make the point that environmental concern could spread throughout the school curriculum. At its peak *BEE* had about 2,500 subscribers from many subject disciplines.

Having had no formal education after the age of 15, Colin owed no allegiance to a particular academic subject and rejected the notion of the teacher as controller, believing that the pupil was neither a jug into which knowledge is poured, nor a piece of clay to be moulded as society wishes. He preferred the analogy of the flower to be nurtured. A favourite quotation that he knew by heart was from the architect and early TCPA supporter W. R. Lethaby, who in 1916 wrote “For the early part of my life, I was quieted by being told that ours was the richest country in the world, until I woke up to know that what I meant by riches was learning and beauty, music and art, and coffee and omelettes”. Colin wanted to introduce those values to young people and saw an opportunity to do so through the growing environmental studies movement.

Essentially, Colin was a writer who for the first fifty years of his life concentrated on polemical commentary and articles, often anonymously or under a pseudonym. At the TCPA, he began a book-writing career that was to yield more than thirty titles over three decades, while maintaining regular columns in prestigious journals and a constant flow of lectures.

All his prodigious written output was created without the aid of modern technology. Colin's antique mechanical typewriter and Tipp-Ex correcting strips were never supplanted by a computer. He wrote without reliance on the electronic cut and paste techniques employed today. His style was accessibly anecdotal rather than distantly theoretical or academic. He wrote as he spoke, with modesty and erudition. His work always included a wealth of direct quotation because, as he said, he never saw the point in re-writing someone else's text in order to make their ideas sound like his alone.

Sharing an office, he would happily maintain a conversation while writing, cigarettes constantly on the go. The normal working context involved merry banter and snatches of comic song for which Colin had a particular predilection. His musical taste was wide, so it was no surprise if *When Father Papered the Parlour* was followed by a burst of *La ci darem la mano* comically punctuated by a cockney 'Gor blimey'. Article or chapter complete, he would pull the last sheet from the machine, clap his hands to his knees and announce 'There we are - all good stuff, no rubbish!'

That was just one of his supply of sayings, many of which I must admit have entered my own family lore. In response to some particularly idiotic right wing politician's pronouncement he would declare, with a satirical dig at the conventional left, "His feet will be cut off when the revolution comes". And his favoured comment on some minor extravagance was "Never mind the expense, give the cat another canary".

Inevitably Colin became steadily more prominent as a national and international figure, turning down numerous invitations to speak, write or join committees. Passing his frequent invitations to attend international events to me, his ever grateful deputy, he would declare that he did not 'believe in abroad', and for years he limited himself to infrequent journeys to see fellow anarchists in Holland or Italy.

When he was at last inveigled into contributing to an environmental education course in Washington, DC, he found that his old friend and expert on third world squatter housing John Turner was on the same flight. John invited Colin to go with him to some high level International Monetary Fund meetings on squatting in between his education lectures, and he made

cogent unrehearsed contributions. But for Colin the highlights of the visit were his forays into the seamier areas of the city, to which he took an instant liking, un-selfconsciously gathering material from people he encountered.

Colin gently mentored those he worked with, consistently demonstrating how an anti-authoritarian could operate productively in a hierarchical world. Inclusive and tolerant towards colleagues, authoritative and optimistic in his writing, self-effacing in manner and with a great sense of fun, he saw no reason to promote himself ahead of his ideas.

He was a man without a trace of egotism. A wealth of self-taught learning and a massive talent for clear and persuasive communication with no pretension or competitive compulsion and without any wish to assert his own superiority made him very special. Everyone who knew him, in person or through his writing, will treasure his memory and live their lives differently as a result.

The wisdom of his social and political insights will enlighten all our futures. And those of us fortunate enough to have worked with him will always remember with love and gratitude the generosity, the humour and the friendship.

On the Margins

Dennis Hardy

I came to know Colin's writings during the 1970s, when I was doing my best to interest social science students in urban planning. First there was *Anarchy in Action*, which cast a new and very bright light on the subject and then the regular copies of the always interesting *BEE* (the Bulletin of Environmental Education that Tony Fyson co-authored and has already told us about).

Soon after Margaret Thatcher came to power — in an unrelated sequence of events, I should add — I managed to get some funding to support a project that would tell the story of an unruly type of settlement known as the plotlands. My own interest had been aroused during a field course for my students that took me to Peacehaven on the south coast, scourge of local authority planners but a place that was surely worth knowing more about.

An ad duly appeared in the press for a research fellow to work with me on the project and to my great surprise an application came in from one Colin Ward. It seemed like calling for players for a village football team and seeing a star player run onto the pitch. Needless to say, he got the fellowship!

Private Eye duly featured the ad in 'Pseud's Corner' and this was followed soon after by a piece in the *Evening Standard*, fulminating on the waste of public money that this kind of research represented. By then we knew we must be doing something right and so we started on what proved to be a constantly fascinating journey and we hope a useful one too.

Most people had never heard of the plotlands as such although they could all recognise one if you named a place like Jaywick Sands or Shoreham Beach. The subject — with its elements of self-build, mutual aid and the small man cocking a snook at the authorities — was right up Colin's street.

A few years earlier Colin had, in fact, written in both *New Society* and *BEE* about a doughty East Ender, Mrs Granger, who in 1932 borrowed a pound

as the down payment on a plot of land in Laindon, Essex. With her husband, who was a caretaker in a block of LCC flats, she arranged for a First World War army bell tent to be placed on the land and they spent their weekends building a place of their own. Later, when it became their permanent home, they reared chickens, geese and goats and grew vegetables on the spacious plot. The important thing is that, through their own endeavour and, poor as they were, they were able to build a place of their own.

Mrs Granger's story was repeated wherever we went and we spent many an enjoyable day setting off for one corner or another of London's coast and countryside. Colin was then living in Putney so we used to meet in the morning at one of the London rail stations and head for yet another 'blot on the landscape'.

As well as poor families making good we also came across another group of people, 'bohemians' who were drawn by the prospect of spending their weekends and holidays by the sea in a converted railway carriage or charabanc. We discovered that Shoreham beach was a popular venue for stars of the London stage, who rushed to Victoria Station after the curtain came down to catch the last train to their coastal refuge, with reminiscent names like 'Cinderella' or 'Sleeping Beauty'. To the locals this was the fast set and their weekend parties raised more than a few eyebrows.

Colin was at home equally with 'luvvies' or labourers and conversation was never a problem as we sat in snug hideaways with paraffin lamps and chintz curtains listening to their various stories. Understandably, these places appealed to artists and we came across the retreats of the likes of Jacob Epstein and Mark Gertler, as well as Derek Jarman on Dungeness Beach.

As well as the picturesque portraits we gathered there was, of course, a more serious side to this as well and we tried to show how the experiences of the plotlanders could be used to help us with our own housing difficulties. This was the 1980s and the idea of self-help was not a million miles from the *laissez faire* end of the Thatcher spectrum. Colin was a great admirer of the work of the architect, Walter Segal, and supported his experiment in self-build in Lewisham. Likewise, he was a fervent supporter of the TCPA's work and wrote a wonderful article along the same lines, called 'A DIY New Town'.

Looking back, if one needs reminding, one can see what an original thinker Colin was, forever casting a fresh perspective on timeworn problems. He always had at his fingertips just the right literary source from the anarchist library and an amazing power of recall. More than that, he was such wonderful company — warm, humorous and cheerful — and we had so much fun in what I suppose one has to categorise as ‘work’ but which with Colin was always a great pleasure.

By the time the plotlands project was completed — published as *Arcadia for All*, and since reprinted by Five Leaves — we still had some unfinished business. On our travels along some of the most marginal stretches of coastline we were intrigued to find as close neighbours to the plotlands another strange British institution, the holiday camp. So one thing led to another and we continued working together to write a history of the British holiday camp.

Some of you might ask how it was that a good anarchist like Colin could get mixed up with something that is almost synonymous with regimentation. I think the answer lies in the parallel stories of poor people having a holiday for the first time; a spirit of camaraderie and even community that characterised this form of holidaying together in the middle of the twentieth century; and the quirky architecture that goes hand in hand with the seaside.

Our book on the holiday camps, *Goodnight Campers!*, has for a while been out of print and Colin was keen that it should be back again on the shelves. Thanks to the efforts of Ross Bradshaw and Five Leaves, a new edition is launched today. Colin most certainly would have joined in celebrating this.

An Instinctive Distrust of Top-down Solutions

Sir Peter Hall

Working with Colin on *Sociable Cities: The Legacy of Ebenezer Howard*, which we published in 1998, was a very special experience. One could misquote Orwell and say that all co-authorship experiences are unique but some are more unique than others. Colin could best be described as a very sparse collaborator. I would send a draft chapter and he would make very minimal comments, which I would take on board. He would send a chapter and I would make minimal comments which, likewise, he would instantly incorporate. But here came the problem, to which others have alluded: Colin resolutely refused to move from the communications technology of 1873, represented by the Underwood portable typewriter which occupies its rightful place on the memorial picture.

Since in 1998 we were already midway into the digital revolution, that meant that I had to feed his text into my home scanner. But long use had produced the effect that every time the letter "g" was displaced upward, with the result that the scanner read every such appearance as "9". The answer was of course a global search-and-replace operation, which was fine except that the year 1998 appeared as 1gg8. Together with Ann Rudkin, who brilliantly edited the manuscript for the publisher, we somehow brought the text into the late twentieth century. Colin of course remained blissfully unaware.

There was another more serious point: Colin happily endorsed my late chapters, calling for a vast planning operation to create huge clusters of new settlements along transport corridors in the south east corner of England, which five years later found an echo in the government's 2003 Sustainable Communities strategy. This did not sound much like Colin, except that the argument was that this could provide a framework for all kinds of local initiative. And the central idea of our book, which we passionately shared, was to ask the question: how should we interpret the philosophy of Ebenezer Howard, whose famous tract *To-Morrow: A Peaceful Path to Real Reform*, had been published exactly a century earlier, in 1898? Howard's

garden cities stemmed from the anarchist thinking that was so influential at that time, and which produced Kropotkin's equally influential *Fields, Factories and Workshops* a year later. They were to be produced through cooperative action by small groups of ordinary people, helped by commercial loans from rich individuals. Those words at the bottom of Howard's famous Three Magnets diagram, *Freedom — Co-operation*, were no mere rhetoric: they represented the core of his ideas. In this vital sense, much of what Colin wrote on urban issues reflected this important but neglected strain of British planning philosophy.

I'd like to take up one related thought from Ken Worpole's presentation: Colin's writings for the magazine *New Society*, which for a quarter of a century, from 1962 until its tragic demise in 1988, played such an important role in popularising new ideas in the social sciences. After a brief period at the start, under Tim Raison who left to become a Tory MP, it was edited by Paul Barker, a very distinguished journalist who recently celebrated his golden wedding. Paul was and is essentially an iconoclast, who welcomed to his pages all kinds of extraordinary thinkers — Reyner Banham, Colin MacInnes, John Berger, Dennis Potter — whose essential qualification was that they challenged the received wisdom. In 1969, Paul invited three of us — Reyner Banham, Cedric Price and me — to collaborate on a special issue, *Nonplan: An Experiment in Freedom*. The resulting furore led to the resignation of the deputy editor, Brian Lapping, who went on to a distinguished career as an independent television producer. To this day the manifesto is the subject of conferences and debates.

Why Colin did not participate I do not know. Perhaps, like Groucho Marx, he would automatically refuse to join any club that invited him. But this episode reflected the important fact that Paul shared with Colin an instinctive distrust of top-down solutions and a belief in the exuberant creativity of individuals. One final tragedy of Colin's departure was that we will never have the chance to read his review of Paul's new book, *The Freedom of Suburbia*, which he would surely have loved. [When I made that point at the memorial meeting, I did not know one thing: Harriet whispered "He was reading it when he died. It's still beside his chair".] That, surely, is Colin's final incomplete memorial.

Colin Ward Remembered

Eileen Adams

I am wearing these clothes today, as when I leave here, I am off on my holidays. I am wearing this jacket — the nearest thing I have to a safari suit — in memory of Colin. When he gave a lecture, the first question would be about an issue raised in his talk: the last question would be — where did you get your safari suit? (Harriet made it.) Being a fashion icon is not the first thing that comes to mind when one thinks of Colin.

My first and lasting impression of Colin was how generous he was with his ideas, his time and his attention. As a child, you are sometimes given a day off school for some important state occasion. As a young teacher, I was given a half day off school to meet Colin Ward, as it would have been too distracting to have to teach and talk with him at the same time. In preparation, I borrowed from the library as many of his books as I could. He came to my flat, and promptly emptied his bulging briefcase to give me his books as presents. From the first contact, he was kind and generous to me, as he was to everyone. However, when he saw that I already had many of his books, he put his copies back in the case. I was too shy to tell him that I did not have my own. Little did I know then that a few years later, he would co-author my first book!

We worked on it in what had been the coal shed of his house in Suffolk. Colin's desk was an old door balanced on piles of books. I sat in a garden chair beside boxes of apples. He worked with the little portable typewriter I had for my 14th birthday, as his was broken. I will always remember its satisfying clickety clack, the buzz of the bees and wasps, the feel of the balmy air and the feeling of sleep enveloping me at dusk, just before Harriet would call us in for supper. Our book was about developing a sense of place, nurturing the *intelligence of feeling.*

Colin set me off on a particular career path, linking art, design and environmental education, developing from the Royal College of Art/GLC's *Front Door* Project at Pimlico School in London (1974-76), then working

with him on the national Schools Council's *Art and the Built Environment* Project at the Town and Country Planning Association (1976-79). The projects were developed at a time when ideas of childcentred learning, social justice and participative democracy permeated educational thinking. Colin described our work as *a lever for educational change* and *a vehicle for empowerment of the child*.

Working with Colin influenced my perception of the world, how I think and how I work. I am very grateful to him. As a colleague, I always had great respect, admiration and love for him. It is not often that anyone can say that about the boss (I use that word advisedly). He was also very funny: he made me laugh! And most importantly, he made me think! There was a lot of sideways learning involved — he would casually push a book under my nose, or mention an author, or make an offhand remark, or place me in an unfamiliar situation or set me a challenge. I knew that he would defend me or rescue me if I were in trouble. As a friend, he was always positive, encouraging and supportive, though he did say that as he got older, he would get up in the morning as an optimist, but go to bed as a pessimist.

My own role as an educator and as an advocate for young people's participation in environmental change has been inspired by Colin's ideas. I am not on my own. He influenced a generation of environmental educators around the world, establishing urban environmental education as an exciting, important and challenging area of study. I have been lucky enough to meet many of them. It was Colin who started me on the path of working internationally. One day, a letter arrived from the International Society for Art (INSEA), inviting him to Paris to a week-long seminar.

> *Paris,* he said*, that's France, isn't it?*
> *Yes,* I replied.
> *That's abroad, isn't it?* he asked.
> *Yes,* I agreed.
> *That's your department!*

Decision made, objections overruled, and I was off to Paris for that seminar, followed by a conference at the Pompidou Centre and another trip as adviser to a television producer — all because Colin chose not to travel!

Over forty years, I have had the good fortune to work in 23 countries and have been able to share Colin's ideas with so many others. I have never been able to get close to his skill as a lecturer, and it would have been impossible for me to model my efforts on his unique style. But I do recall him rising from his crumpled posture and springing to life when it was his turn to speak. I remember how animated he was developing the narrative and how convincing his arguments, how he entertained with stories and anecdotes and lightened the tone with humour. He spoke honestly in response to questioners. No one left his lectures without new perceptions and fresh insights. I have tried to emulate his approach in my own lectures on *Learning through Landscapes*, *inter-professional collaboration in education*, *education for sustainability*, *public art* and *Power Drawing*. In all of these, there have been similar threads of awareness to action, developing people's ability to participate in cultural life or in shaping the environment.

Colin is famous for his work as an anarchist, but for me, I saw him more as a humanist. Humanism is based on the values characteristics and behaviour believed to be the best in human beings. Colin believed the best of people and brought out the best in them.

Colin Ward and the Revolution of Human Relationships

Roman Krznaric

The day I heard about Colin's death, I gathered together my library of his writings — at least twenty books on an astonishing variety of subjects — and stayed up all night reading. One of my favourites is *Influences*, in which he described some of the thinkers who had shaped his view of the world, amongst them Alexander Herzen, Mary Wollstonecraft and Paul Goodman. That night I realised just how much Colin had been one of my own influences, offering new ideas and inspiration for how I approached the art of living.

I first came across his work in 1997 in the anarchist newspaper *Freedom*, which I had started reading as an antidote to the mainstream papers which were obsessed with the general election of that year. I quickly became addicted to his books, from the classic Anarchy in Action to more quirky titles like *Goodnight Campers! The History of the British Holiday Camp*. Later I became friends with Colin and his wife Harriet (herself a formidable thinker and writer) and for a decade made regular trips to stay with them in Suffolk. Colin was a gentle man and a wonderful storyteller. He had a boyish chuckle, a mischievous glint in his eye, and would often break out into song while munching on a sausage, drawing on his astounding memory — which unfortunately faded in his last years — to recollect lyrics from his 1930s Essex childhood. It is no wonder that his son and two step-sons all ended up as musicians.

Although he developed an international reputation and was invited to speak all over the world, Colin rarely took the opportunity to travel abroad. Instead one of the highlights of his week was a bus trip — he couldn't drive — from his rural home to the town of Ipswich, where he would go to the cinema with Harriet and raid the local library, of which he must have been their most fanatical user. Back at home, when he wasn't reading, he would spend most of his time clattering away on his old typewriter knocking out yet another Colin Ward book or diligently responding to correspondence

from Korean anarchists, Norwegian allotment experts and others amongst his global following.

What I really loved about Colin was his capacity to see the good in people. He didn't expend his energy attacking those whose views he did not share, and could usually find a kind word for them. Of the notoriously prickly American anarchist Murray Bookchin, he once said, 'I am quite happy that we only meet every fifteen years or so, because we enquire about health and family rather than about those things which might unite or divide us'. That was about as far as Colin could go in terms of personal criticism, and he made a point of avoiding the infighting within the anarchist movement. I think we can all learn from Colin, who realised that the purpose of ideas is to help create the world, not to destroy it.

My favourite story about him — which I may have unconsciously embellished over the years — concerns his period as a teacher of the new-fangled subject of Liberal Studies at Wandsworth Technical College in South London during the 1960s. Most of his students were young apprentices in the building trade, and when he walked in to teach his first class he asked them what it was they wanted to learn — what difficulties did they face in their lives that he could really help them with? It turned out that their greatest concern was with lack of sleep. So Colin duly crammed his brain full of the scholarly literature on sleep and set about teaching a term of classes on the art of sleeping. It is a story that has always stayed with me as a teacher, the ultimate example of making an effort to meet your students' needs.

For most people the typical image of an anarchist is a bombthrowing Russian from the nineteenth century or a black-masked youth at one of today's anti-capitalist demonstrations. Colin was neither. He came from a different anarchist tradition, one which saw social change emerging not from violence and revolution, but from expanding social cooperation and mutual aid in everyday life. His writings celebrated worker cooperatives, tenant housing associations, allotment holders, children's adventure playgrounds, Friendly Societies and organisations like the Royal National Lifeboat Institution. This is where he saw 'anarchy in action' — people organising themselves on a voluntary, non-hierarchical and decentralised

basis — a social model reflecting the anarchism of one of Colin's major influences, the Russian writer and geographer Peter Kropotkin. Colin believed that an anarchist society was not an imagined future state, but rather something that existed in the here and now, all around us. It was a latent force, 'like a seed beneath the snow' as he used to say, that had the power to push back the boundaries of the centralised state and the capitalist system.

Colin was fond of quoting the early-twentieth century German anarchist Gustav Landauer, who wrote:

> *The state is not something which can be destroyed by a revolution, but is a condition, a certain relationship between human beings, a mode of human behaviour; we destroy it by contracting other relationships, by behaving differently.*

Here was the idea that social change was not about new laws, governments, or policies, but about creating a revolution of human relationships from the bottom up, and shifting the way individuals treated one another. It was an approach that had a profound impact on my own thinking, drawing me away from my early interest in traditional party politics and state power (I used to be a university politics lecturer) and towards developing my ideas about empathy as a force for social change. Colin's writings on the social philosophy of Martin Buber in his book *Influences* introduced me to another thinker who has deeply shaped my beliefs about the power of empathy.

Outside anarchist circles, Colin had a major impact as a social and oral historian, taking his readers into unexpected landscapes to hear voices that mainstream historians generally ignored. His book *The Allotment: Its Landscape and Culture* (written with David Crouch) showed vegetable gardeners as ingenious improvisers, while *The Child in the City* revealed the extraordinary creativity of kids who played in urban slums. One of his last books, *Cotters and Squatters*, which chronicled the history of squatting in Britain since the seventeenth century, was typical of his work, bringing to life a whole social subculture about which few people have any knowledge. Part of what made Colin's books so compelling was not only the extraordinary range and originality of the subject matter, but also his conversational style and accessible prose: he was highly allergic to

theoretical and academic jargon. That is why I rank him as one of the great political communicators of the last century, alongside writers such as George Orwell. As I write, I have a photo of Colin looking down on me, keeping an eye not only on the quality of my ideas, but on how I express them.

Colin had an extreme distaste for nationalist, religious or political separatism. He rejected the ideologies and simplistic patriotisms that led people to kill one another. In 1942, as a sixteen-year-old during the darkest days of the Second World War, he made a point of copying out the following lines written by the columnist Bill Connor in the *Daily Mirror*:

> *Our children are guarded from diphtheria by what a Japanese and a German did. They are saved from smallpox by an Englishman's work. They are saved from rabies because of a Frenchman. From birth to death they are surrounded by an invisible host — the spirits of men who never served a lesser loyalty than the welfare of mankind.*

While Colin cherished this humanising quote as central to his own vision of the world, he gradually came to inhabit its very lines himself. Colin Ward is now part of that invisible host surrounding our lives, whose work will keep quietly shaping human welfare and creating the revolution of human relationships that we so desperately need.

Colin Ward: Selected Bibliography

A selected bibliography of principal publications with date of original publication.

Items with asterisk are currently in print.

A Decade of Anarchy, selections from the journal Anarchy, 1961-70, editor. Freedom Press, 1987.*

Anarchism: A Very Short Introduction, Oxford University Press, 2004.*

Anarchy in Action, Allen & Unwin,1973. Freedom Press, 1982.*

Arcadia for All: the legacy of a makeshift landscape, with Dennis Hardy, Mansell, 1984. New edition from Five Leaves Publications, 2004.*

Art and the Built Environment, with Eileen Adams, Longman, 1982.

Autonomy, Solidarity, Possibility: The Colin Ward Reader (edited by Damian F. White and Chris Wilbert), AK Press, 2011*.

British School Buildings: Designs and Appraisals 1964-74, editor, Architectural Press, 1976.

Chartres: the Making of a Miracle, Folio Society,1986.

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Freedom to Go: After the Motor Age, Freedom Press,1991.*

Goodnight Campers! The History of the British Holiday Camp, with Dennis Hardy, Mansell, 1986. New edition from Five Leaves Publications, 2010.*

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Housing: An Anarchist Approach, Freedom Press,1976.

Images of Childhood in Old Postcards, with Tim Ward, Alan Sutton, 1991.

Influences: Voices of Creative Dissent, Green Books, 1992.

New Town, Home Town, Gulbenkian Foundation,1993.

Talking Anarchy, conversations with David Goodway, Five Leaves Publications, 2003.

Talking Green: 10 Lectures, Five Leaves Publications, 2012.*

Talking Houses: 10 Lectures, Freedom Press,1990.*

Talking to Architects: 10 Lectures, Freedom Press, 1996.*

Talking Schools: 10 Lectures, Freedom Press, 1995.*

The Allotment: Its Landscape and Culture, with David Crouch, Faber and Faber,1988. Five Leaves Publications, 1994.*

The Child In The City, Architectural Press,1978. Paperback, Penguin 1979. New edition Bedford Square Press, 1990.

The Child in the Country, Robert Hale, 1988. Bedford Square Press, 1990.

Reflected in Water: a Crisis of Social Responsibility, Cassell,1997.

Sociable Cities: The Legacy of Ebenezer Howard, with Peter Hall, Wiley, 1998.

Social Policy: An Anarchist Response, London School of Economics, 1996. Reprinted by Freedom Press, 2000.*

Streetwork: The Exploding School, with Anthony Fyson, Routledge, 1973.

Tenants Take Over, Architectural Press, 1974.

Undermining the Central Line, with Ruth Rendell, Chatto & Windus,1989.

Utopia, Penguin, 1974.

Vandalism, editor, Architectural Press, 1974.

Violence, Penguin Connexions, 1970.

Welcome, Thinner City: Urban Survival in the 1990s, Bedford Square Press,1989.

When We Build Again: Let's Have Housing that Works!, Pluto Press, 1985.

Work, Penguin Connexions,1972.

Books edited or introduced by Colin Ward

For the Folio Society:

Kropotkin's *Memoirs of a Revolutionist*, 1978.

Turgenev's *Fathers and Sons*, 1979.

Thoreau's *Walden*, 1980.

Herzen's *Childhood, Youth and Exile*, 1983.

Isaak Walton's *The Life of Dr John Donne*, 1988.

Mark Twain's *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, 1993.

Joseph Conrad's *The Secret Agent*, 1999.

For Allen and Unwin:

Kropotkin's Fields, *Factories and Workshops*, 1974 (New edition from Freedom Press, 1984.*)

For Freedom Press:

Lewis Mumford's *The Future of Technics and Civilisation*, 1986.*

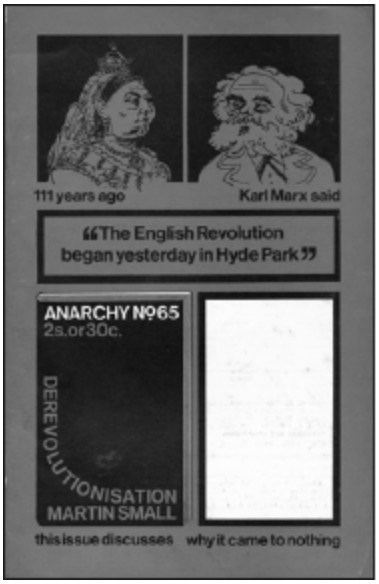
Books relating to Colin Ward

Autonomy, Solidarity, Possibility: The Colin Ward Reader edited by Damian F. White and Chris Wilbert, AK Press, 2011.

Richer Futures: Fashioning a New Politics, a festschrift in honour of Colin Ward, edited by Ken Worpole, Earthscan, 1999.

Anarchist Seeds Beneath the Snow: Left-Libertarian Thought and British Writers from William Morris to Colin Ward, David Goodway, Liverpool University Press, 2006.

Dan Poyner is currently working on a publication of covers of *Anarchy* magazine. For further information please contact dan.poyner@btopenworld.com.

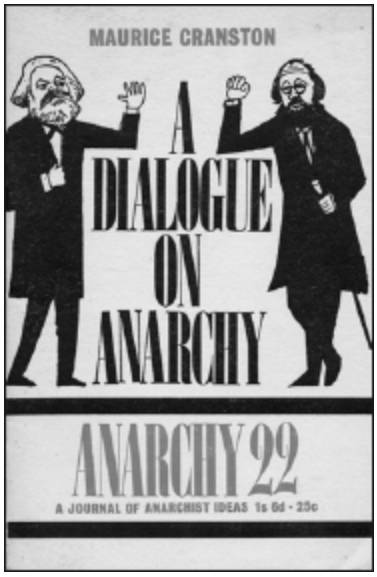


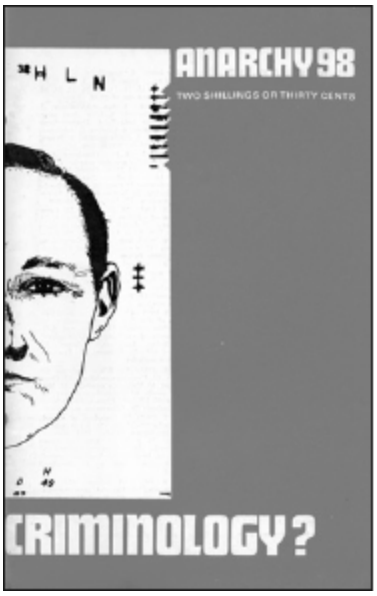
Colin Ward as editor & columnist

Colin Ward was a contributing editor of *Freedom* from 1947 to 1960, and edited the Freedom Press Monthly, *Anarchy*, from 1961 to 1970.

He edited the *Bulletin of Environmental Education (BEE)* from 1971 to 1979.

Colin Ward contributed a regular feature under the ‘Stand’ column in *New Society* from 1978 to 1988, and wrote a weekly feature for *The New Statesman* called ‘Fringe Benefits’ from 1988 to 1996. He also wrote a monthly column in the journal, *Town and Country Planning*, under the title of ‘People and Ideas’ from 1979 to 2005.





Contributors

Eileen Adams worked with Colin Ward at the TCPA on the *Art and the Built Environment Project*, and continues their efforts to improve young people's educational experience through producing many publications, including her latest, *Drawing – It Makes You Think* – one of the books in the Power Drawing series for The Campaign for Drawing.

Ross Bradshaw is the publisher at Five Leaves.

David Downes is Professor Emeritus of Social Policy at the London School of Economics, where Colin was Centennial Professor in 1996. They had been friends since the early 1960s, when Colin encouraged sociologists to contribute to **Anarchy**, especially on education, crime and punishment.

Dennis Hardy joined with Colin Ward to write two books, marking the start of a lifelong friendship; he is currently completing a book on the Mediterranean before starting a new project on utopian cities.

Tony Fyson is a freelance writer on planning matters and worked with Colin in the Town and Country Planning Association Environmental Education Unit from 1971 to 1979.

Peter Hall is working on an update of the book *Sociable Cities*, which was first written jointly with Colin Ward.

Roman Krznaric writes on creative thinking about the art of living and social change, is co-founder of The School of Life in London, and runs www.outrospection.org, a blog dedicated to empathy.

Peter Marshall first met Colin in the early seventies and shares a common interest in anarchism, allotments and children. He is the author of *Demanding the Impossible: a history of anarchism*.

John Pilgrim's life was drastically changed twice by Colin Ward, first by commissioning work that took an uneducated barrow boy to university and later, after prolonged illness, jump-started a belated writing career.

Ben Ward is Colin's son, now living in Canada. His Honours degree in Performance Arts from Middlesex University was bestowed on the same day in 1994 that Colin was awarded an Honorary Doctorate. He now records and performs as a singer-songwriter under the name Ben Walker.

Harriet Ward was married to Colin for 44 years. In 1980 they moved from London to Suffolk, where Colin became a full-time writer and Harriet continued teaching in Further Education until her retirement.

George West first met Colin in 1950 when they both worked in the architectural practice of Bridgwater Shepheard and Epstein in Bruton Place, Westminster. They became lifelong friends.

Stuart White, a political theorist at Oxford University, is currently writing a book on pragmatic anarchists, anxious collectivists and radical liberals in post-war Britain which will feature a chapter on the ideas of Colin Ward.

Ken Worpole is a writer on architecture, landscape and social policy, and edited the Colin Ward festschrift, *Richer Futures: Fashioning a New Politics*, published by Earthscan in 1999.

Colin Ward in conversation with Roger Deakin

A feature of the memorial meeting in London was the showing of an excerpt from a film of Colin in conversation with the late Roger Deakin. The film's director, Mike Dibb, here describes his association with Colin and the making of this film: "I first met Colin in the 1970s and, although we tried to get one or two TV collaborations off the ground, sadly these never happened. So I was delighted when, in 2003, I was finally able to capture some of Colin's eloquence, insights and mischievous glee in the autobiographical conversation I filmed with his Suffolk neighbour, friend and kindred spirit, the late writer Roger Deakin." This DVD, over 2 hours long, is available by mail order from Harriet Ward, 1, Church Cottages, Cross Green, Debenham, Suffolk IP14 6QF, price £11.50 including P&P, or from Housmans Bookshop in London, 020 7837 4473.